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Historical Sketches

OF

Rancocas and Neighborhood

By

GEORGE DeCOU

Author of
Moorestown and Her Neighbors
Mount Holly and Vicinity

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I enjoy sharing
my books as I
do my friends,
asking only that you
treat them well and
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Woolman-Land

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Indian Background

The Lenni-Lenape or Delaware Indians as they were frequently called, doubtless for the reason that they occupied the valley of the Delaware, were the only inhabitants of what is now Burlington County when the English settlers arrived in the Fall of 1677, with the exception of two or three Dutch families who lived at the mouth of the Assiscunk Creek. The Lenape Nation was divided into three main sub-tribes, the Minsis of North Jersey, the Unami of Central Jersey and the Unilachtigos of South Jersey. The Rancocas Indians belonged to the Unami tribe. The name was frequently written Ancocas in the early records, which doubtless was for the reason that the Unami Indians, according to Charles A. Philhower, the greatest living authority on the New Jersey Indians, did not have a sound in their language which could be interpreted by our letter "R." Watson in his Annals of Old Philadelphia, upheld this view, as he tells us that the Indians called the early Quakers "Quekels" and "Pennsylvania "Quekelink," the country of the Quakers.

I believe, however, that Rancocas historically is the correct name and as it is more euphonious than Ancocas, I am thankful that it has been adopted. Nearly all of the early English records refer to the stream as the "Rankokus or Northampton River," the latter name having been given to it by Daniel Wills and the other pioneer settlers who came from Northamptonshire, England. William Penn, in a letter written to the Society of Traders in 1683 when speaking of the beauty of the Indian language, mentions the name Rancocas.

The first reference to the Rancocas Indians of which I have any knowledge, was in a letter written by Robert Evelin in about 1648, who with his uncle, Captain Yonge, and a few traders "sat down" near the mouth of Pensauken Creek in 1634. When enumerating the various Indian tribes that dwelt on the banks of the Delaware from Cape May to Trenton, he mentions the Amarongs who lived on Pensauken Creek and then mentions "King Ramcock, who with forty men, dwelt five miles farther up the river."

An Indian deed dated April 9th, 1649, for the territory now lying between Rancocas Creek and the Assiscunk at Burlington, reads in part as follows: "For land on South River (Delaware) from Ramkokes Kil northward to a Kil on south end of an island called Tinnnekonck." This is the earliest reference that I have found which gives the stream the name Ramkokes or Rankokes Creek. The deed was executed by a number of Indian chiefs to Alexander Boyer and Symon Root and was witnessed by three Swedes—Peter Harmansen, David Davitsen, Cornelis Mouretsen.

Peter Lindstrom, a Swedish Engineer, on a map of Nya Suecia (New Sweden) published in 1655, calls the stream "Rancoquess Kyl" and in a footnote adds "the Creek of the Rancoquess Indians." I could give other evidence to show that the name was spelled Rancocas rather than Ancocas by the early Swedish and English settlers but perhaps the above is sufficient. It is one of the few remaining Indian place names and perhaps the most beautiful and it is hoped that it will never be changed.

An old map published in 1673 charts a large Indian town between the two branches of the Creek not far from where they unite about a half mile above Centreton, and it is not improbable that this was the chief town of the Rancocas Indians. This village was ideally located for hunting and fishing as well as for defense. Tradition, however, locates their principal town near the present village of Rancocas and probably on the bank of the Creek. The Rancocas, with its two branches and many tributaries was one of the chief habitats of the Delawares, which is shown by the many relics that have been and are still found along its banks. Indian villages and camps were almost invariably located on the banks of a stream or near an unfailing spring. High ground was always selected and if possible where there was a light sandy soil which could be easily tilled with their crude implements.

There is a tradition in the Wills family that there was an Indian village on the Wills farm which was located on the bank of the Creek about 150 yards above the present Centreton Road. An Indian burying ground was located on or near the site of the Friends' Cemetery. Tradition also persistently states that there was an

Indian village on the knoll west of the famous Indian spring on the James Stokes farm, about one-third mile west of Rancocas village. There can be no doubt that there were many Indian villages and camps along the northern side of Rancocas Creek from the Delaware River eastward to Mount Holly. The Indians were a nomadic people and their camps were frequently shifted from place to place.

It is well known that John Brainerd, the gifted and saintly Presbyterian missionary to the West Jersey Indians, had a preaching station near Rancocas, the location of which I have been unable to ascertain. He frequently referred to his preaching station at Rancocas and on one occasion told of a journey from the Delaware River along the south bank of the Rancocas to a place where he met the Indians about six miles from the river. At this particular meeting he said that about twenty Indians gathered to hear him preach.

The pioneer settlers in their letters to the home folks in England, very frequently bore testimony to the friendliness of the Lenape Indians. When the English Quakers arrived in 1677 they were kindly received by King Ockanickon and other Sachems living in the neighborhood of Burlington. In fact, the first arrivals would have had a very difficult time in surviving their first winter had it not been for the kindness of the natives, who brought them venison, maize, etc., and also helped them construct rude huts until they could erect more substantial homes.

An early writer describes the natives as "upright in person, straight of limb, grave even to sadness." They were kind to each other, especially to the aged, and were courteous to strangers. The mat in the centre of the hut was always reserved for the guest.

Gabriel Thomas, who came over with William Penn in 1682, published a book entitled "Historical and Geographical Account of Penna. and West Jersey" in which he gives us an interesting picture of the life and habits of Burlington County's first residents. "They (the Indians) are very loving to one another for if three or four of them come to a Christian home and the master of it happens to give one of them victuals and none to the rest, he would divide it into equal shares among them; and they are also very kind and civil to the Christians for I myself have had victuals cut by them in their cabbins before they took any for themselves."

The story of the degeneration and passing of the Delaware Indians is sad and at times tragic but intensely interesting. Their degeneration began with the introduction of rum by the Dutch and Swedish settlers early in the Seventeenth Century. The natives did not have any intoxicating liquors and could not stand the effect of "fire water" of which they became very fond. The introduction of smallpox and other contagious diseases unknown to the natives, also played an important part in their passing. The Indians themselves seemed to understand that their days were numbered in West Jersey as they saw clearly that they could not withstand the evils of white civilization.

An Indian King in 1680 when the famous Newton Comet appeared in the sky was asked what it signified and replied sadly, "it means that we Indians shall pass away and this country will be occupied by another people."

The last of the Delaware Indians in the neighborhood of Rancocas lived in a log cabin which stood on the Woolman farm, back of the tenement house near the Creek on the eastern side of the farm. This old Indian, whose name was Ashatama, claimed that he was the last of the race in Burlington county, but in this he was wrong as his daughter, known as Indian Ann, who lived for many years at Indian Mills, died in 1894 at the age of almost one hundred years and was buried in the Methodist graveyard at Tabernacle. Indian Ann was a full-blooded Indian but married a mulatto named John Roberts and a number of their descendants are said to be living in the southern end of the county.

Dr. A. M. Stackhouse, of Moorestown, who visited Granville Leeds at the Woolman farm in 1899, was told a very interesting anecdote about Ashatama, related to him by his grandfather, Dr. Granville Woolman: Ashtama once came to the home of Doctor Woolman's father, who was also named Granville, and asked for some cider of which he was very fond. He was told he could have a bushel basket full and Ashatama without

saying a word returned to his cabin and proceeded to weave a bushel basket, making the meshes as close as possible. He then took the basket to the creek and after dipping it in the water several times, hung it on a tree and as the weather was cold the water soon froze. He then returned to the house, presented the basket which was temporarily water-tight, and Granville Woolman immediately filled it, realizing that the joke was on him.

Old Roads and Early Settlers

The village of Rancocas, with its surrounding country is one of the most interesting and home-like communities in Burlington County. Its cultural background is reflected in the lives of its citizens, some of whom are descended from the pioneers. The spirit of John Woolman, the gifted and saintly Quaker who was born on the bank of the Rancocas not far from the village, seems to hover over the quiet and peaceful countryside. It is, above all, a friendly neighborhood.

The village itself is little over one hundred years old, but the valley of the Rancocas from the Delaware River, the Lenni-Wihittuck of the Indians, was settled shortly after the arrival of the Kent in the fall of 1677 and is one of the oldest communities in Burlington County. Gordon's Gazetteer and History of New Jersey (1834) does not mention the village of Rancocas, and Barber and Howe's Historical Collections (1844) refers to it as "the new and handsome village." In 1832, when the Centreton Bridge was erected and the present road laid out to Rancocas, there were only two or three houses where the village now stands. The brick house at the Southeast corner of the Mount Holly and Centreton Roads, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice E. Lundy, is the oldest house in the village, having been erected prior to 1800.

The present road on which the Meeting House stands, was laid out in 1771, as shown by the following record in Book A, County Clerk's Office, Mount Holly, under date of March 13th, 1771: "Four Pole Road from the Northwest corner of Asher Woolman's plantation nearly straight across the several plantations to the Southeast corner of Governor Franklin's Deer Park and from thence to continue as the old road now goes until it comes to Salem Road." In 1775 this road was extended Eastward to Mount Holly "across the lands of said Woolman and Jacob Hillier . . . . to the Great Road from Burlington to Bridgetown"—(Mount Holly). The Asher Woolman plantation is now owned by Mrs. M. V. Friend and is located about one-third of a mile East of Rancocas. The homestead was built by Asher Woolman in about 1754.

The original road from Mount Holly to Beverly ran much closer to the Creek than the present road. This road started at Burlington and passed the old Quaker Meeting House which formerly stood at the western end of the cemetery on Woodlane Road north of the Mount, in Mount Holly, thence westward "on by the Friends' graveyard and John Wills' Mill thence through Willingboro over Harding's location by a celebrated Indian spring and School House nearby Thomas Olive's mill to Dunk's Ferry now the City of Beverly." The Indian Spring referred to is located on the James Stokes' farm, a little west of Rancocas, now owned by Theodore N. Patterson, and the school house formerly stood on the hillside near it. The Wills Mill, to which I shall again refer, was located in the ravine south of the Friends' graveyard on Centreton Road.

Another ancient highway was laid out in 1712 from "John Garwood's land" near Pemberton, thence through Mount Holly and westward along the northern side of Rancocas Creek until it joined the "old path" on or near the Woolman farm, now owned by Mrs. Hudson Haines. The record for this road recorded December 30th, 1712, reads as follows: "Then laid out one public common highway of four rods in breadth, beginning at John Garwood's land; thence as the path goes by James Shinn's; thence as the path goes to a run of water by the corner of William Budd's fence; thence through the fenced land in the old path to Thomas Atkinson's; thence along the path by Josiah Gas-

kill's; thence as the path goes to Josiah Southwick's and Edward Gaskill's; thence along the path as it is marked to Thomas Bryan's fence; thence as it is marked over a corner of Lydia Horner's field; thence along by Thomas Bryan's ditch; thence as it is marked to pine swamp; thence along the path as it is marked to a run of water by Revel Elton's field; thence as it is marked over said field and over a corner of George Bliss' field, and a little field in Joseph Devonish's land till it meets the **old path**; then along the same, as it is marked to the westernmost side of John Wills' land; thence along the old path, and as it is marked in the township of Willingboro to the Salem Road; thence along the same over the bridge to the upland; thence as it is marked by Ralph Cowgill's house; thence as it is marked to Ferry Point (Beverly). Laid out by us the day and year above written. Thomas Raper, Joshua Humphries, John Wills, Commissioners."

It is comparatively easy for those who are familiar with the early surveys on Rancocas Creek to trace the approximate course of this old Highway. It was doubtless over this Road that John Woolman, the Journalist, when a mere lad, trudged through mud and dust to the little schoolhouse near the Indian Spring and later walked or rode to Mount Holly to take up his life work in that thriving village.

EARLY SETTLERS — The pioneer settlers whose homes were located on the bluff overlooking the Rancocas from the mouth of Mill Creek (formerly Olive's Mill Creek) to the Stokes' Plantation above the forks, were an exceptionally intelligent and forceful group of men and women. Three of these, Dr. Daniel Wills, Thomas Olive and Benjamin Scott, were members of the Commission appointed by William Penn and other proprietors to purchase land from the Indians and to set up a government under the "Concessions and Agreements" adopted on March 3, 1676, and signed by William Penn and one hundred and fifty other purchasers of land in West Jersey. The Rancocas pioneers, with the exception of William Evans, Robert Hudson and Walter Humphries, were signers of this famous document, and eight of the group, Thomas Olive, Daniel Wills, John Roberts, Thomas Eves, Benjamin Scott, Thomas Harding, Thomas Stokes and Robert Powell were passengers on the Kent which arrived in the early fall of 1677.

A very interesting and helpful map of these early locations, drawn by Charles Stokes, may be seen in Woodward and Hageman's History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, published in 1883. I will list these surveys as shown on this map, beginning at the mouth of Mill Creek eastward:

Thomas Olive, 636 acres recorded April 25th and July, 1682. The Salem Road from Adams Wharf to Charleston is the Eastern boundary of this survey.

Thomas Eves, 100 acres recorded January 12th, 1681-2.

John Roberts, 68 acres recorded in 1682.

Thomas French, 600 acres recorded 2d mo. (April) 1684.

Robert Powell, 150 acres, recorded January 7th, 1681-2. This plantation was located north of Mill Creek opposite the French tract. Dr. Robert Dimsdale located 500 acres adjoining the French plantation on the East on October 13th, 1682, which does not seem to have been mentioned by Charles Stokes. In 1684 Dr. Dimsdale purchased a large tract of land extending from Mount Holly to Lumberton and moved to that location shortly afterwards.

Robert Hudson, 210 acres recorded in 1685.

William Evans, 323 acres recorded October 13, 1682.

Thomas Harding, 200 acres recorded December, 1681.

John Payne, 200 acres recorded December 21, 1681.

Benjamin Scott, recorded prior to 1682. Acreage not known. This tract was located north of Thomas Harding's plantation and extended to Mill Creek. (The location on the Stokes' map is wrong).

Dr. Daniel Wills, East of the Centreton Road, 500 acres recorded December 21st, 1681. On the same date Dr. Wills recorded 300 acres adjoining his home plantation on the north, 200 acres of which were for his son Daniel, and 100 acres for George Elkinton. The two tracts extended from Rancocas to Mill Creek.

John Boarton, 110 acres recorded March 27, 1680.

John Woolman, 150 acres recorded December, 1681.

Walter Humphries, 200 acres recorded May 20th, 1681.

Bernard Devonish, 400 acres, recorded October 2d, 1683.

John Stokes, 162 acres, recorded October 2d, 1683. This was the original home of Thomas and Mary Barnard Stokes, the progenitors of the family in West Jersey. The survey was recorded in the name of his brother, John, who apparently never came to America. In May, 1701, John Stokes conveyed this farm to his brother Thomas, for "five shillings lawful money of England and the natural love and affection which I do have and beare unto my brother Thomas living at or near Burlington in West Jersey." The records show that John died in London on July 8, 1709.

The survey for John Payne recorded in Revel's "Book of Surveys" on December 21, 1681, reads—"John Pain for the use of Thomas Green" but a re-survey made on February 9, 1741 (recorded in Book A, page 2981) corrected this error as the purchase was made for Thomas Green of England by his Attorney, John Payne. This farm, which adjoins the Centreton Road on the West, was purchased by Joseph Lundy, great grandfather of J. Wilmer and Maurice E. Lundy in 1810. The property is now owned by William Spohn Baker, who is greatly interested in the history of the old farm and has carefully preserved the Colonial features of the fine old homestead.

These old Colonial families have almost entirely disappeared from the neighborhood. Thomas Olive died in 1692 and his widow, Mary Wills Olive, afterwards married Robert Ewer, of Philadelphia. The Eves, Roberts, French, Evans and Borton families moved to Evesham and Chester Townships prior to 1700. The Powell, Hudson, Harding, Scott, Payne, Green, Humphries and Devonish names have entirely disappeared from the vicinity of Rancocas. Joseph Wills, whose attractive home is located on Woodlane Road, is the only one bearing the name Wills near Rancocas and Frances Stokes Janney is, insofar as I can learn, the only Stokes in the neighborhood. The Woolman name has disappeared, although Elizabeth Leeds Buzby, Gertrude Leeds Haines, Caroline Leeds Warrick and their children, are direct descendants of the pioneer, John Woolman.

These early arrivals were followed by the Hilyard, Buzby, Haines, Lundy, Hansell, McIlvain, Williams and Leeds families, all of whom were active and influential in the affairs of the neighborhood during the Nineteenth and early part of the Twentieth Centuries. John and Martha Devonish Hilliard, the progenitors of the family in Burlington County, settled on the Rancocas above the forks in the 1680's. John Hilliard purchased 100 acres from his father-in-law, Bernard Devonish, on December 19th, 1689, but the records indicate that he was in the neighborhood prior to that time. He purchased an additional 150 acres from John Powell, brother of the pioneer, Robert Powell, on May 9th, 1700, the exact location of which is not known to the writer.

Nicholas Buzby, the first of the family to settle near Rancocas, was the son of John and Mary Buzby of the Parish of Shipton, England, who arrived at Philadelphia in 1682 and settled in the neighborhood of Frankford, Penna. Nicholas Buzby married Mary French, daughter of Thomas and Jane French, the original owners of Franklin Park farm, on August 30, 1695, and doubtless settled in Willingboro Township. The Burlington Monthly Meeting records show that his brother "Richard Buzby of the Province of Pennsylvania" married Hannah French, sister of Mary, on the same day.

In 1717, Nicholas Buzby purchased the Franklin Park farm from his brother-in-law, Charles French, and it is interesting to note that this beautiful old farm is now owned by T. Harvey Buzby, a lineal descendant of Nicholas and Mary. Thomas Buzby, the oldest son of Nicholas and Mary, married Margaret Haines in 1727 and their son, Thomas, who married Tabitha Hugg in 1765, erected the old brick homestead still standing on the bank of Rancocas Creek west of Franklin Park. The initials and date T. and T. B. 1783 appear on the western end of the old house in blue header bricks. T. Harvey and Elgar Buzby, sons of Thomas and Elizabeth Leeds Buzby, are the only ones bearing the name now living in the neighborhood.

*I am indebted to Frederick A. Eckhart, of Moorestown, for this information.

Samuel Haines, son of William and grandson of Richard and Margaret Haines, the pioneers, apparently was the first of the name to settle near Rancocas. He purchased the William Grovatt farm, which is located north of the village, from Aaron and Rachel Wills in 1760. This farm is part of the original Thomas Green plantation surveyed in 1681, and the frame house now standing is undoubtedly the oldest in the neighborhood. William Haines, who owned the farm for many years, died in 1927, in his ninety-fourth year and stated shortly before his death that the house was then 240 years old.

The central section of the old mansion is undoubtedly the oldest and evidently was erected very early in the Eighteenth Century or possibly in the latter part of the Seventeenth. The pent roof, small window panes, wide floor boards, corner fireplace and cupboard, Chippendale latches and H. L. hinges, all suggest a very early period.

Rachel, Alice W., Mordecai, Hudson and Granville Haines are the only ones bearing the name now living in the neighborhood. Samuel Haines, father of Thomas Lee Haines, Alfred C., Edward P. and the late Dr. Samuel S. Haines, conducted a steam flour mill in Rancocas for many years. It was located on Second Street opposite the Methodist Episcopal Church and doubtless will be remembered by the older residents of the village.

The pioneers, Richard and Margaret Haines, with their children, sailed from Northamptonshire, England, on the "Amity" in 1682. It was a tragic journey for the mother, as her husband died and her son, Joseph, was born during the voyage. Her oldest son, John, married Esther, daughter of John and Ann Borton in 1684 and settled near Lumberton.

Joseph Lundy, great grandfather of Maurice E. Lundy, of Rancocas, was the first of the name to settle in the neighborhood. In 1810 he purchased the farm adjoining Centreton Road on the west, originally the Thomas Green plantation, the southern portion of which is now owned by William Spohn Baker. This farm, which contained 163 acres, extended northward about a mile and a quarter and included the western portion of Rancocas village. The Lundy family afterwards sold many lots on which the village now stands.

Jacob Leeds, who married Margaret Woolman, daughter of Dr. Granville Woolman, a lineal descendant of the pioneer John Woolman, in 1853, and lived in the brick homestead at the southwest corner of the Beverly and Masonville Roads, was the first to settle in the neighborhood. They conducted the store now owned by William M. Stevens for many years. Jacob and Margaret Woolman Leeds were the parents of Elizabeth Leeds Buzby, now living in Rancocas, and of Phoebe Leeds Jones of Moorestown. In 1878 they purchased the old Woolman farm, but never resided on it. The Leeds family trace their descent from Thomas Leeds of Shrewsbury, New Jersey, whose son Daniel settled on a large farm on the Assiscunk Creek between Burlington and Jacksonville in 1682.

T. Sterling McIlvain, father of Horace K. McIlvain of Mount Holly, purchased part of the original Bernard Devonish plantation in 1876 and for many years the McIlvains lived in the fine old brick homestead which formerly stood on the site of the present residence of Walter L. Jessup. The McIlvain home, erected by an early Hilyard, which was one of the most beautiful Colonial homes in the neighborhood, unfortunately was burned a few years ago. It stood on a high bluff and commanded one of the most beautiful views of the Rancocas and country beyond in the neighborhood.

The McIlvain farm, as already stated, was part of the original tract of 400 acres surveyed for Bernard Devonish and recorded on October 2, 1683. Bernard Devonish and his son-in-law, John Hillier or Hilliard, as the name is generally spelled in the old records, probably came over in the "Kent" in 1677. There is a tradition in the family that when Bernard Devonish arrived on the Rancocas and gazed across the creek, he remarked, "this is the place I have seen in my dreams." He named his new plantation Dewberry Hill, which is said to have been the name of his estate in England. His first home in the wilderness of West Jersey was a log cabin which stood near the site of the Jessup homestead. Bernard Devonish died in 1694 and was buried in the yard not far from Mr. Jessup's house. J. Frank Hilyard, of Rancocas, is the only descendant now living in Rancocas.

Thomas Olive and His Famous Mill

Thomas Olive's plantation, containing 636 acres, was located on Mill Creek fronting on the Rancocas and extended back to the village of Charleston. The present Salem Road* extending from Adams Wharf on the Rancocas through Charleston to Burlington was the approximate eastern boundary. There are two records of surveys for this tract under dates of April 25th, and July, 1682. The first reads, "For Thomas Ollive one parcell of land beginning at a hickory tree in ye lyne of Thomas Eves and runs north, northeast sixty-eight chains to ye creek called Mill Creek and from a black oak there marked, it is bounded along by ye said creek, till it comes **neare the mill**, then crossing ye creek it runs from there westward twelve chains to a white oak for a corner, thence west, southwest thirty chains to Rankokus (alias) Northampton River, thence up ye said river to ye mouth of ye said creek and crossing again the same to a white oak thereby marked for a corner, it goes east and by north twenty-five chains to a black oak marked for a corner **neare the house**, thence southeast and by east fifty chains till it reaches the corner tree first aforesaid." Surveyed for 500 acres.

The second survey reads, "For Thomas Ollive one parcell of land adjoining to ye land whereon hee, ye said Thomas is seated, beginning at a hickory marked for a corner next ye said land of Thomas Eves, runs by the same south, southwest fifty chains to Rankokus (alias) Northampton River to a black oak marked for a corner, thence by ye river twenty chains to an oake for a second corner, thence north, northeast fifty chains into ye woods to a black oak for a third corner, then againe from a black oak for a corner neare ye said Thomas Ollives house, it runs southwest and by west again to ye river, thence up ye same to ye mouth of ye Mill Creek and soe up ye creek to ye land formerly surveyed to ye said Thomas Ollive, as aforesaid." Surveyed for 136 acres.

It is evident from the wording of these surveys which refer to his grist mill as well as to his home, that the early surveys frequently were not recorded until sometime after they were made. The question of the exact location of his mill has been discussed pro and con by many writers, some suggesting that the old mill on the northern side of the creek at Charleston was the site of the original Olive mill. This cannot be correct as his original survey did not include any land north of Mill Creek. Charles Stokes, of Rancocas, in his sketch of Willingboro Township stated that the Olive Mill was located on the eastern bank of Mill Creek about 80 yards below the present bridge on the Rancocas-Beverly Road. His grandfather, Charles Stokes, a prominent surveyor and painstaking historian, also stated in a paper read before the West Jersey Surveyors' Association in 1868 that it was located in that locality. A careful study of Thomas Olive's first survey as recorded above, clearly indicates that the mill was located on Mill Creek in the locality suggested by Charles Stokes and his grandson.

The hickory tree "in ye lyne of Thomas Eves" (Salem Road) evidently stood a little to the south of the Beverly Road. Measuring 68 chains north, northeast from this point we come to the creek at Charleston, thence following same "till it comes neare the mill," the line crossed the creek and ran due west 12 chains thence south southwest 30 chains (three-eighths of a mile) to Rancocas Creek. This point would be a little less than one-half mile from the bridge over Mill Creek which quite definitely fixes the location of the old mill in the neighborhood designated by Charles Stokes.

In 1888, Oliver Parry, who then lived on the northern side of the road, purchased 175 additional acres (in two tracts) of the original Olive plantation. The survey for tract No. 2, (Book XII, p. 154) definitely establishes the fact that there was a mill below the bridge over Mill Creek on the Rancocas-Beverly Road, which strongly corroborates the claim that the Olive mill was located in this neighborhood. The survey begins in the middle of the bridge over Mill Creek, thence easterly along the Rancocas Road approximately 34 chains, thence southerly 12 chains, thence westerly 34 chains to Mill Creek, thence "up the middle of Mill Creek

*This road is the original Salem Road or King's Highway authorized by the West Jersey Assembly in 1681 from Burlington to Salem.

and along the **old raceway** the several courses thereof to the place of beginning." In an earlier deed of this same tract dated 1858, the last course of the survey is recited in the same manner.

The bridge over Mill Creek was formerly located about eighty yards below the present bridge. The approach to the old bridge across the lowland on the eastern side of the creek can be plainly traced and it is probable this bank is part of the Olive mill dam. The following extracts from the minutes of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, show that Thomas Olive's dam was used as a public crossing in the pioneer days: "Whereas ye inhabitants of ye towne (township) of Willingborough being met togeather at ye house of Thomas Ollive in ye County of Burlington, have agreed that every loaded cart that shall pass over ye Mill Damme shall pay three pence a tyme, and every empty cart passing over and not returning loaded shall pay two pence a tyme and every horned beast of one years old and upward shall pay one penny a head for every tyme going or coming over ye said damme and whosoever shall deny payment as aforesaid shall forfeit his own privilege." Witness our hands this first day of seventh mo. 1692: Thomas ffrench, Thomas Ollive, Thomas Harding, Robert Hudson, John Payne, Richard ffenimore, Abraham Hewlings, John Scott, Thomas Ever.

The second entry relating to the old dam is also of interest. It is dated 8th mo. 9th, 1692, shortly after the death of Thomas Olive. "Alsoe Thomas Ollive in his life tyme and Daniel Wills one of the executors of Thomas Olive promised that for a bridle way† ye inhabitants of Willingborough and all other persons shall have free passage over the mill damme of sd. Thomas Ollive but not for a driftway"**

Thomas Olive died in 1692 and left his "Willingborough Farm" then containing 860 acres to his wife Mary, who was the daughter of Dr. Daniel Wills. In 1694, his widow married Robert Ewer, of Philadelphia and in 1698, they sold the plantation to John Test, of Philadelphia.

Thomas Olive was a prominent and influential Friend and played an important part in the establishment of civil government in West Jersey, serving as the first speaker of the Assembly and afterwards as Governor of the Province. He was also a Justice of Peace for a number of years and there is an interesting tradition that he, at times, held Court in the meadow near his home, using a stump of a tree for his seat of justice. An interesting anecdote of Thomas Olive, the Quaker preacher, statesman and miller, was told by Henry Armitt Brown in his famous oration at the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of Burlington in 1877. "Well, Thomas," a customer asked, "when can my corn be ground?" "I shall be at the Assembly next third day," replied Thomas, "and I shall bring it for thee, behind me, on my horse."

Solomon Ridgway purchased the Olive plantation from Barzillai and Elizabeth Coate on March 24th, 1773, and on April 8th, 1786, sold "the plantation where I now dwell" to Joseph Ridgway. Joseph devised the plantation to his daughter, Martha Ridgway Deacon, wife of Daniel Deacon, on December 28th, 1823. Martha Deacon afterwards sold the plantation containing 171 acres to Benjamin E. Ridgway, who devised the farm to his grandsons, Benjamin R. and Restore B. Lamb.

The Lambs sold part of the plantation including the homestead to Benjamin Ridgway on June 27th, 1888. The farm was sold at Sheriff sale on June 23, 1888, to George Warner, whose executors sold it to Oliver Parry in July of that year.

Solomon, Joseph and Benjamin Ridgway lived on the old brick homestead now standing on the Parry farm near Mill Creek and south of the Rancocas-Beverly Road. This old homestead probably was built by Solomon Ridgway in 1773 and stood quite near Thomas Olive's famous Mill. Its site marks the approximate location of the Olive homestead. Thomas Olive's first survey states that his house was located 25 chains (about one-third mile) from Rancocas Creek and consequently it could hardly have been north of the road as claimed by some writers.

†It must not be forgotten that there were no carriages or wagons other than ox-carts in the county at that time.

**The old road records of Mount Holly frequently refer to a driftway as a private road.

Stokingham—The Old Harding Plantation

Thomas Harding located 200 acres on Rancocas Creek a little below Centreton Road in 1681. It is one of the earliest surveys on the creek. Rancocas history virtually began in the Harding homestead which was beautifully located on the high bank of the Rancocas about where the present house stands. The first Friends' meetings were held in the Harding homestead in 1681, as shown by the records of Burlington Monthly Meeting. At a meeting held in Burlington in First month, 1681, the following Minute was adopted: "Thomas Harding and John Woolman are desired to give notice to the Friends of Rancocas to confer with Friends here next Monthly Meeting about the meeting there and to give an account of itt." At a subsequent meeting held in Third month of that year, a Minute records "it is agreed that the meeting at Rancocas be held at the home of Thomas Harding." The Rancocas Meeting was the first to be "settled" by Burlington Monthly Meeting and consequently, is the second oldest meeting in the county.

Thomas Harding died in 1708 and in 1712 the homestead, with about 150 acres of land, was purchased by John Stokes, son of Thomas and Mary Barnard Stokes who arrived on "The Kent" in 1677 and settled on the northern bank of Rancocas Creek a little above the forks. Thomas Stokes was a signer of the Concessions and Agreements, the fundamental law of West Jersey which was drawn up by William Penn and his associates in 1676 and signed by 150 purchasers of land in West Jersey. John Stokes married Elizabeth Green, daughter of Thomas Green, of "old England" who is known in history, or at least in the traditions of the Stokes family as "Lady Green" and a very pretty story has come down to us of their courtship and marriage. The Greens were a proud and aristocratic family and as Elizabeth had formed an attachment for a youth in England to whom her parents were strenuously opposed, she with her brother John, were sent to West Jersey, apparently under the care of Dr. Daniel Wills, to prevent her marriage.

It is probable that they lived with Daniel Wills in Burlington until the home was erected on their father's plantation, which joined the Wills farm on the west. This plantation, the southern portion of which is now owned by Mr. Baker, was purchased for their father, Thomas Green, in 1681, by his Attorney, John Payne. Thomas Green, Sr. who apparently never came to this country, devised the farm to his son John.

When the gay Elizabeth arrived in the wilderness of West Jersey, a young man was wanted to take care of her horses and to act as her guide and protector when she rode through the beautiful woodland paths of the neighborhood. John Stokes, a dependable and trustworthy young Quaker, living about a mile up the creek, was employed for this pleasant duty. They became warm friends as they rode along the Indian paths or canoeed on the Rancocas and their friendship soon developed into love. They were married in 1712 and settled in the old Harding homestead. Tradition says that her family opposed the match but afterwards became reconciled as they doubtless learned that Stokes' blood was at least as blue as "Green" blood.

The Harding plantation, which extended northward to the Rancocas-Beverly Road, was divided by David Stokes early in the Nineteenth Century between his sons, Israel and Charles, the former retaining the homestead farm and the latter the northern section fronting on Beverly Road.

The homestead farm, locally known as "Stokingham" remained in possession of the Stokes family until 1876, when it was purchased by Henry H. Troth, whose widow, Elizabeth Stokes Troth, a direct descendant of Thomas and Mary Stokes, is now living in Moorestown. Mrs. Troth informed the writer that they gave the name Stokingham, which in old English means the home of the Stokes family, to the old farm. The present house was built by David Stokes, grandson of John and Elizabeth, and rebuilt by his grandson, Israel Stokes, the original homestead, which stood a little nearer to the creek, having been burned in about 1800. The farm is now owned by Royston D. Engle, a grandson of Tylee B. Engle, who formerly owned the farm, and a descendant of Thomas and Mary Stokes.

The northern end of the plantation,

fronting on the Beverly Road a little west of the village of Rancocas, for many years the home of James M. and Eva Bartlett Stokes, is now owned by Theodore N. Patterson. The attractive brick homestead, now the residence of Mr. Patterson, was erected by Charles Stokes, grandfather of James M. Stokes, in 1816. The famous Indian spring to which I have elsewhere referred, is located on this farm near the tenement house and the waters still gush from the hillside and doubtless the water is as pure and health-giving as in the days of the pioneers.

The original road leading from Mount Holly to Beverly, prior to the laying out of the more direct road in 1771, passed near the spring and the school house, which tradition says was located on the hillside, about 100 yards northwest of the spring. Mr. Stokes told me that in his boyhood days the old road could be distinctly traced across the farm. The school house was a one-room affair, about 20 feet square, and here the children of the pioneer settlers and of the natives from the Indian village on the hill back of the spring, were taught the three R's. Charles Stokes in his "History of Friends' School at Ankokas," written in 1913, stated that, "about forty years ago when excavating I saw the foundation walls of this old school." I regret that I have not been able to find a record of when the school was established or by whom it was taught.

The old farm remained in the Stokes family until the recent death of James M. Stokes, the line of title being as follows: John and Elizabeth Green Stokes; John and Hannah Stogdelle Stokes; David and Ann Lancaster Stokes; Charles and Tacy Jarrett Stokes; William and Anna McIlvaine Stokes; James and Eva Bartlett Stokes, Theodore N. Patterson.

There formerly was a bank or levee along the northern side of Rancocas creek which was constructed by the early settlers for the purpose of preventing the water from overflowing the meadows. This enabled the farmers to harvest "meadow hay" in large quantities. Some of the older residents distinctly recall playing on this bank in their childhood.

The Wills Plantation and First Meeting House

Dr. Daniel Wills, a London Commissioner, and one of the most prominent and influential of the pioneer settlers in West Jersey, arrived with a large family of children on the Kent in 1677 and first settled in Burlington. The survey for his plantation east of the Centreton Road dated December 21st, 1681, reads: "for Daniel Wills one parcell of land abutting on Rankokus alias Northampton River beginning at John Boartons corner stake by the marsh and runs thence westerly by the River fforty chains to a stake on the west side of a small creek, thence by the land of John Payne into the woods north, northeast one hundred twenty-five chains to a white oak marked for a corner, thence south, southwest till it meets a corner stake of John Boarton, by whose lyne it descends down to ye corner stake first aforesaid." Surveyed for 500 acres.

This survey undoubtedly was made prior to the time recorded, as the records show that on March 27th, 1680, he sold 110 acres adjoining his own property on the east to "John Boarton" the founder of the Borton family in West Jersey. The Wills plantation included the land on which the village of Rancocas now stands, lying east of the Centreton Road.

Daniel Wills also located a 300-acre tract north of his home plantation which was recorded on the same date. The return of survey reads, "For three hundred acres, one hundred acres for George Elkinton and two hundred acres for Daniel Wills, Jr., on Mill Creek adjoining Daniel Wills, Sr. and John Boarton." This plantation which later came into the possession of the Borton family is located on the road leading from Rancocas to Burlington which was laid out prior to 1762. The eastern end of the present homestead on this tract was built by George Elkinton, great grandson of the pioneer in 1765. The property was purchased by Joseph Borton, grandfather of William J. Borton, of Moorestown, in 1835, and was enlarged by him. The Elkintons are one of the most prominent Quaker families in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, but as far as I can learn none of the descendants of George Elkinton, the

progenitor of the family in New Jersey, are now living in the vicinity of Rancocas.

The present homestead standing on the bluff overlooking the meadow and creek, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Bauman, was erected by Aaron Wills in 1786. The letters on the western end A. and R. W., 1786, stand for Aaron and Rachel Wills. The original Wills homestead stood on the meadow bank about 150 yards from the Centreton Road. The old farm is historically interesting, not only because it was the country residence of Dr. Daniel Wills, but also for the reasons that the first Friends' burying ground and meeting house and the second grist mill in the community were located on the original survey. The burying ground which was established shortly after the arrival of the early settlers, is still used by the descendants of the old families. The following list of burials is taken from the Asa Matlack collection now in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, and was copied by him in 1824 from the Wills family records. The list was made by John Wills, son of the pioneer. Mary Kendall, wife of Thomas, 1687; William Evans, 1688; Judith Olive, first wife of Thomas, 1688; Joseph Wills, son of Dr. Daniel, 1691; Mary Wills, wife of Daniel, 1691; Samuel Wills, son of Daniel, 1692; Thomas Evans, 1692; Elinor Harding, wife of Thomas, 1692; Mary Stokes, wife of Thomas, 1697; Sarah Paine, wife of John, 1701; Ann Green, wife of Edward, 1702; John Wills, son of John, 1703; Elizabeth Harding, wife of Thomas, 1707; Hannah Eves, wife of Thomas, 1708; Thomas Harding, 1708; John Hudson, son of Robert, 1709; George Elkinton, 1713; Lydia Horner, 1713; Mary Wills, daughter of John, 1714; Mary Elkinton, wife of George, 1714; Rachel Humphreys, wife of Joshua, 1714; John Woolman, the pioneer, 1718; Elizabeth Woolman, wife of John, 1718; Hope Wills, wife of John, 1720; Joshua Humphreys, 1721; William Wickam, 1721; Hannah Wills, wife of John, 1724; Joseph Elkinton, son of George, 1724; Nicholas Buzby, 1727.

The following later burials (Nineteenth Century) are taken from a plan of the Rancocas Burying Ground, drawn by Charles Stokes, Jr., from data furnished by Daniel Wills in 1872: Samuel Wills; E. & A. Haines; Samuel Haines; Joseph Wills; Moses Wills; George Stockton; D. Buzby; D. & S. Wills; George Haines; A. & W. Buzby; Jacob and Jonathan Hilyard; Jarvis Stokes; Joseph Lundy; William Scattergood; Joseph Rogers; B. E. Ridgeway; Amos Austin; Thomas, Joseph and William Buzby; Enoch Elkinton; Acher Woolman.

The first Quaker meeting house in the community stood at the northern end of the cemetery on land presented to the trustees by John Wills. The following records of Burlington Monthly Meeting show clearly that 1703 is the correct date of the building of this meeting house and not 1720, as stated by Charles Stokes in his History of the Ancokas Friends' School, written in 1913: "Ye 6th of ye 5th mo. 1702, John Wills* in behalf of ye major part of ye frds. belonging to Rancocas Meeting made a proposal before this meeting of ye building of a meeting house for themselves by their burying ground, desiring ye councel of this meeting and this meeting leaves them to their liberty to proceede."

"ye 4th of 11th mo. 1702, John Wills proposed to this meeting concerning ye ordering and letting of ye meeting house to workmen of Ancocas, this meeting leaveing it to ye neighboring friend that lives near ye place the dementions being spoken to at this meeting to be 30 foot long from oute to oute and 22 foot wide from oute to oute and 12 foot in hight on ye wall."

At the meeting held on 1st of 12th mo., 1702, John Wills and Thomas Eves were appointed "to have ye oversite of the work and to agree with ye workmen." The 3d of 3d mo., 1703, the meeting appointed "Thomas Eves, George Elketon, Restore Lippincott, Richard Ridgway, Samuel Jenings and Thomas Gardner," to be named in the conveyances "as persons in trust by ye meeting to which Jno. Wills signes for ye meeting house ground at Rancokess." The meeting house was completed in the Fall of 1703, as recorded in the Minutes dated the 7th of the 12th mo., 1703. "Jno. Wills reports to this meeting that their meeting house at Northampton is fit to meet in, orders yt (that) first days and week days meeting be kept in it wch

*John Wills, son of Dr. Daniel Wills, inherited the plantation at his father's death in 1698.

(which) this meeting approveth of and orders that the three weeks meeting formerly kept at Joshua Humphries is now to be kept at the new meeting house."

The Wills family records show that the meeting house was standing in 1772, when the present meeting house at Rancocas was erected. Samuel Wills,** born in 1765, has left a record that he could distinctly remember going to meeting in the old building when a small boy. He also recalled that there was a large fireplace in the southwest corner near which the mothers sat with their children in extreme weather. The following description of this quaint building, the author of which is unknown to the writer, is interesting and of historical value: "The first meeting house was probably near the graveyard, and built of logs hewn out of the timber that stood on the ground where the house was placed. It was primitive in the last degree and without any comforts or conveniences now deemed so necessary. The floor was of clay, beaten hard and made as even as possible. A single window with four panes of 'Bulls eye glass' placed in the wall back of where the elders sat, was the only means of light when the door was closed. There may have been an open fireplace and chimney for heating purposes, if not, then the only protection from the cold was found in foot stoves or in warm bricks or stones brought by each family on meeting days and placed under their feet during the service." This description doubtless based on tradition, may not be accurate in all details.

Daniel Wills, father of William R. Wills, was the first Friend to place a gravestone in the old grave yard. This, of course, shocked some of the more conservative Friends who felt that it was a display of vanity and consequently it was promptly lowered to the level of the ground. Daniel Wills, however, who had a very strong will of his own, immediately replaced it and finally the Meeting agreed to permit it to stand.

The Wills plantation remained in the family until 1887, when the owner, William R. Wills, died. Dr. Daniel Wills has many descendants throughout the County, but only one of the name, Joseph Wills, is now living in the immediate neighborhood. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wills live in the brick homestead at the corner of Park and Woodlane Roads near Mill Creek, about one mile above the village of Charleston. The Western end of this fine old residence was erected in 1764, by Joseph and Hannah Buzby. It is marked with blue end header bricks, J. and H. B., 1764.

Dr. Daniel Wills died in Barbadoes when settling the affairs of his brother William, in 1698, and the home plantation was inherited by his son, John. He was one of the most distinguished men among the early arrivals in West Jersey, having served as one of the London Commissioners, a member of the West Jersey Assembly and Land Commissioner.

Dr. Wills, the first physician to practice in Burlington County, was evidently a Doctor of note as he was called to the bedside of Henry Stanbrooke, of Newcastle, Delaware, very shortly after his arrival on "The Kent" in the summer of 1677, as shown by the following extract from the Newcastle court records of "ye 5th day of March annoq Dom: 1677-8": "the acct. of Phisik administered by doctor Daniell Wells unto henry Stanbrooke deceased with his Peticon being preferred In Court—The Cort ordered ye vendu Master Ephraim Herman to pay ye said acct. to ye Sume of sixty gilders with ye Cost unto ye said doctor Wells out of ye vendu monny in his hands belonging to ye said Stanbrooke."

The name is spelled Wells in this record but in a later record referring to the same transaction it is properly spelled Wills.

THE WILLS GRIST MILL—The Wills Grist or Corn Mill, as grist mills were frequently called in the early days, was located on the stream that skirts the graveyard on the south about 100 feet from Centreton Road. It is difficult to realize that the tiny stream, which now winds its way through the ravine, once carried sufficient water to turn the wheels of a colonial mill. The spot where the mill stood is now covered with trees and underbrush, but the dam breast can be clearly traced. The old mill stones could be plainly seen from the road when the leaves were not on the trees

**Great grandfather of Mrs. Joseph H. Roberts, of Moorestown, to whom I am indebted for the opportunity of looking over the Wills' family records compiled by her father, Joseph W. Lippincott in about 1880. Much of the interesting data regarding the old meeting house and grist mill were obtained from these records.

until about twenty years ago. William J. Boyd, a recent owner of the farm, became interested in my search for the old stones and as he knew about where they were located he soon uncovered one of them which had slid down into the ravine and was completely hidden by earth and leaves. I am indebted to Mr. Boyd for his kindness in showing me around the old farm and for locating the exact site of the old mill, which was established by Dr. Wills, early in the 1690's.

The grist mill was one of the first industries established in Burlington county and in pioneer days played an important part in the social and political life of the community. Here the farmers gathered from far and near and while waiting for their grist discussed crops, weather conditions, politics or perhaps the latest depredations of the wolves and panthers† among their sheep and cattle. There were no wagons in the days of which I am writing, other than the cumbersome ox cart and the grain was carried to and from the mill on horseback.

†The West Jersey Assembly passed a law in 1683 offering a bounty of ten shillings for each wolf's head and in 1697 another law was passed increasing the bounty to twenty shillings for wolves and panthers.

There is an interesting tradition in the Wills family that men rode horseback from the neighborhood of Little Egg Harbor with sacks of corn on their horses to be ground at the Wills mill prior to the establishment of the Andrews mill near Tuckerton in 1704.

It is entirely possible that there were a few homes clustered around the Meeting House and grist mill, the community being known as Rancocas long before the establishment of the present village of that name. The Minute authorizing the building of the first Friends' Meeting House near the graveyard referred to it as "meeting house att Rancocus" and in 1720 when Burlington Monthly Meeting appointed representatives of the various meetings to collect funds for completion of the meeting house at Mount Holly, Hugh Sharp was named "for Northampton att Rancokus."

Franklin Park Farm

This beautiful farm, located about one mile west of Rancocas on the Beverly Road, is one of the most interesting places in Burlington county. It is part of the Thomas French tract of six hundred acres surveyed in 1684, and is now owned by T. Harvey Buzby, a descendant of Thomas French, through his daughter, Mary, who married Nicholas Buzby, son of the pioneer, John Buzby, in 1695. It is interesting to note that Nicholas Buzby's brother, Richard, married Mary's sister, Hannah French, on the same day. The farm came into the possession of the Buzby family in 1717, when Nicholas Buzby bought 260 acres of the original survey from his brother-in-law, Charles French, son of Thomas.

John Buzby, Jr., grandson of Nicholas and Mary Buzby, who inherited part of this farm, sold the homestead farm to John Smith, of Burlington, in 1763, and the latter sold it to Governor William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, on June 4, 1770, for 2000 Pounds Proclamation* money. The deed recorded at Trenton** reads in part "all that plantation or tract of land now in the tenure and occupation of the said William Franklin in the township of Willingborough formerly known by the name Strawberry Hill but now by the name Franklin Park." In 1785, Governor Franklin, then living in England, an exile from his native land, transferred the property to his son, William Temple Franklin, the deed of transfer being witnessed by Benjamin Franklin, his son-in-law Benjamin Franklin Bache, and his friend, Jonathan Williams. Temple Franklin, tiring of the life of a farmer, sold the farm to Robert Morris, of Philadelphia, in 1790, who in turn conveyed it to William Bell, of that city, in 1794.

*Queen Ann issued a proclamation in 1704, fixing the value of coin in the Colonies, hence the name proclamation money.

The following advertisement which appeared in Dunlap's American Advertiser, under date of April 17th, 1793, may be of interest to the reader:

FOR SALE—An Estate called FRANKLIN PARKE,
Formerly belonging to Governor Franklin, and lately the place of residence of W. Temple Franklin, Esq., situate in Burlington county, state of

**Liber A-B, page 422.

New Jersey, about five miles from the city of Burlington, on Ancocas Creek, and at nearly the same distance from Mount Holly. There is 600 acres of land, partly arable, some meadow and the rest woodland—on which are erected three farm houses, in different places, so that it may be divided into three farms, if desirable or continued in one, at the pleasure of the owner. The principal house was fitted up for his own occupancy by Mr. Franklin, and this estate is deemed to be well adapted for the use of a genteel family as well as for a farm. It has a landing on Ancocus Creek, from which produce can be sent any or every day to the Philadelphia Market, being about only fifteen miles distant either by water or by land.
For terms of sale apply in Philadelphia to

Robert Morris.

Mayberry McVaugh, the famous Quaker school teacher of Rancocas, purchased the homestead property from Joseph Churchman on March 25th, 1822, and afterwards established the Franklin Park Academy, a famous boarding school for boys. In 1831 Mayberry McVaugh sold to George B. Deacon and Silas Warner "two undivided third parts of Franklin Park for $2,500.00 from each party." Silas Warner died intestate in 1835 and his widow Sarah A. Warner, by order of the Court, conveyed her interest to McVaugh and Deacon. In 1838 George B. Deacon sold his interest to Mayberry McVaugh, who thus again became sole owner of the property.

The property again came into the possession of the Buzby family in 1850, when it was purchased from Mayberry McVaugh by Hudson Buzby, great grandfather of the present owner. Hudson Buzby conveyed it to his son, Richard, in 1862, and the latter in 1887 to his son, Thomas Buzby, father of T. Harvey Buzby, who now owns the plantation and lives in the homestead.

The present attractive old mansion, pleasantly located on a hill commanding a beautiful view of the surrounding country, is not, in my opinion, the original house occupied by the Franklins. Barber & Howe's "Historical Collections" (1844) states in reference to the old farm, "Governor Franklin's residence was destroyed by fire a few years since."

The Historical Atlas of New Jersey (1876) in a sketch of Willingborough Township says, "on the site of Franklin Park Academy at Rancocas, there formerly stood the mansion of the last Royal Governor, William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin. It was destroyed by fire about 1839."

Charles Stokes, of Rancocas, in a paper read at a meeting of the West Jersey Surveyors' Association in 1868, when referring to Franklin Park said, "The old Governor's mansion was destroyed by fire some twenty-five years since and a new one erected nearly on the same site is now owned and occupied by Richard Buzby.

Woodward and Hageman's History (1883) in the sketch of Willingborough Township written by Charles Stokes, grandson of the above-mentioned Charles Stokes, says, "at one time after the property went out of the Franklin family it was owned by Mayberry McVaugh, who erected the brick building now standing and established a boarding school for boys." As much as I would like to accept the tradition that the present building is the Governor's mansion, I cannot ignore the above records. The style of architecture of the present building also suggests a later period than when Governor Franklin owned the plantation.

The testimony of Charles Stokes (grandfather Charles) in the article published in the Proceedings of the West Jersey Surveyors' Association in 1868, is perhaps the most convincing. Charles Stokes was about 49 years of age when the fire is supposed to have taken place and was then living within a mile of Franklin Park Farm. Howard Wills and grandson Charles Stokes, who wrote the sketch of Willingboro Township published in Woodward and Hageman's History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, were not born until after the Franklin home is supposed to have been burned and consequently their testimony must be regarded as tradition. Israel Stokes, Jr., was then about 16 years of age and his sister, Mrs. Williams, perhaps four years older.

It is but fair to state, however, that Howard Wills, of Beverly, now in his 93d year, is definitely of the opinion that the present building is the one which was occupied by Governor Franklin from 1770 to 1776. Howard Wills is the great grandson of Hudson Buzby, who purchased the farm in 1850, and lived during the greater part

of his life about a mile from Franklin Park.

Dr. Asa Matlack Stackhouse visited the Rancocas neighborhood in 1899 and called on Israel Stokes, who then lived at "Stokingham" and asked him whether the house on the Franklin Park farm, then the residence of Thomas and Elizabeth Leeds Buzby, was the original Governor's mansion. Mr. Stokes and his sister, Mrs. Susan Williams, who was present, stated that their father, Israel Stokes, had frequently told them that the Buzby homestead was the house occupied by Governor Franklin. Israel Stokes and his sister, who were born early in the 1820's, also said that they could distinctly remember the present homestead from their earliest childhood.

The evidence would seem to be about equally divided, but students of Colonial buildings are quite definitely of the opinion that the architecture of the present house indicates a later period than 1770-1776. It will be noticed that all of the brick houses in the neighborhood which are known to have been erected between 1764 and 1789 have the initials of the builders and date of erection built in the end wall and that all have the blue end header bricks on at least one side. None have the twin chimneys connected by a brick wall like the Franklin Park homestead, which is characteristic of the period 1800-1840. If the present homestead had any of the characteristics of the earlier period, either outside or in, I would gladly accept the tradition that the Buzby home was the Governor's mansion. It is probable, that the original house was destroyed by fire in about 1840, as previously suggested, and rebuilt as it appears today.

Benjamin Franklin frequently visited his son and grandson at Franklin Park and doubtless here carried on some of the experiments in scientific farming for which he was noted.† The farm is historically interesting and important for the reason it was the country home of William Franklin, the last Colonial Governor whose official residence was located on the river bank at Burlington, a little west of Wood street. Governor Franklin was a man of great ability and had he espoused the patriots' cause, doubtless would have been one of the outstanding figures of the Revolutionary period. He remained loyal to King George, however, and in 1776 he was called before the Revolutionary body sitting in Burlington and banished from the Colony because of his Tory activities. It is said that he was arrested at Franklin Park.

The Governor and his son, Temple, were interested in scientific farming and though aristocratic in their manner of living they were popular with the farmers of the neighborhood. The famous Deer Park, which is still a tradition in the neighborhood, was located north of the homestead. The woods on Park Road were part of the one hundred-acre tract that was set apart for deer and other wild game.

†It is definitely known that Benjamin Franklin purchased a 300-acre farm near Burlington in 1747, with the expectation to settle on same and spend the balance of his life in scientific and agricultural experiments. The Deed for this farm was not recorded and its exact location is not known.

John Woolman, Quaker Journalist

John Woolman, the pioneer, grandfather of the Journalist, arrived in America late in 1678 or early in 1679 and shortly afterwards settled on the north side of Rancocas Creek, almost directly opposite the "Forks," about a half mile above the bridge at Centreton. He was a young man at the time of his arrival and on 8th mo. 8th, 1684, married Elizabeth Borton, daughter of John and Ann Borton, the progenitors of the Borton family in New Jersey. Before leaving England, John Woolman purchased 1-32d of a share of land in West Jersey from Thomas Hooton, owner of a full share bought from William Penn et al on 11th mo. 6th, 1676.

He located 150 acres a little above the Wills tract, surveyed for him by Daniel Leeds in November, 1681,* and doubtless built the homestead on the bank of the creek at the time of his marriage in 1684. The plantation had a frontage of 5 chains (330 ft.) on the Rancocas and extended in a northerly direction for over two miles. The survey also records 110 acres for John Borton, lying between the Woolman and Wills plantations.

*Basse's Book of Surveys, page 162. Secretary of State's Office, Trenton, N. J.

The Woolman farm, now owned by Mrs. Hudson B. Haines, daughter of the late Granville Woolman Leeds, is locally known as the Granville Leeds farm. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Haines, nee Gertrude Leeds, is a descendant of the pioneer, John Woolman. In 1687, John Woolman added to his possessions by purchasing 200 acres from John Ridges, of England, who in 1685 had given Samuel Jennings power of attorney to sell his lands in West Jersey. Mrs. Haines has in her possession this interesting and valuable old deed, which bears the signature of Samuel Jennings, the first Deputy Governor of the Province of West Jersey. This, however, is not the deed for the original purchase, as stated by some writers, but rather for a proprietary right of 200 acres of land in West Jersey "to be laid forth & surveyed to the sd John Woolman," as stated therein.

John Woolman, whose celebrated Journal was one of the first books selected by Charles W. Eliot for his famous Harvard Classics, was born on the Leeds farm on the 19th of 10th mo., 1720. He was the son of Samuel and Elizabeth Burr Woolman and grandson of the pioneer, John Woolman. The Journalist, was the fourth of thirteen children and the oldest of seven brothers.

The house in which was born is no longer standing, although some of the bricks are said to have been used in the construction of the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Granville Haines. It is generally supposed that the original house was located down the hill and about fifty feet east of the present driveway, but the writer is decidedly of the opinion that it stood on or near the site of the present homestead, as stated by Charles Stokes in his article entitled, "History of the Friends' School at Ankokas," written in 1913. The pioneer settlers, almost without exception, selected the highest land near a navigable stream for their homes, largely to avoid malaria and the "mosketto fly." Their appreciation of the beauties of nature also influenced them in selecting the highest ground available. The tradition that the birthplace of the journalist was located on the slope leading to the Creek, perhaps 200 feet southeast of the present house, is based on the fact that bricks were formerly plowed up at a certain spot indicating the presence of a house. This, however, is not conclusive evidence, as the bricks might have been from a tenant house or smoke-house.

When Dr. Stackhouse visited Granville Leeds in 1899, he had an interesting talk with him regarding the early history of the old Woolman farm. In his notes telling of his visit to Rancocas at that time, Dr. Stackhouse stated that the house in which John Woolman, the journalist, was born, stood "near" the present homestead. The date stone from the original house was placed in the eastern end of the present building which was erected by Granville and Hannah Stokes Woolman in 1806. This date stone is located beneath the marker on the present building and was covered up when the house was stuccoed, probably by Dr. Granville Woolman, in 1860. This would seem to corroborate Charles Stokes' statement that the original brick house stood on or near the site of the present home of Granville Haines.

The old date stone taken from the original building, bore the letters J. and E. W. and the date 1703. The initials, of course, stood for John and Elizabeth Woolman, grandparents of the journalist. As John Woolman married Elizabeth Borton in 1684, it is probable they lived in a log cabin or frame building prior to the erection of the brick homestead in 1703.

Very little is known of the childhood of John Woolman other than that which he tells us in his famous Journal. I love to think of him as a little lad playing on the bank of the Rancocas with his brothers and sisters or wandering through the woods in search of adventure. Doubtless he enjoyed playing with the Indian children from the nearby villages and riding with them in dug-out canoes on the Rancocas. He tells us far too little of his boyhood life in his Journal, which was not commenced until his thirty-sixth year, yet perhaps enough to show that he was a normal though deeply gifted child. The famous incident of the killing of the mother robin told in his Journal, which so beautifully illustrates his sympathetic imagination and deep love for all of God's creatures, also suggests the normal, active, country lad, for many of us who were raised on farms can recall some such thoughtless action.

"On going to a neighbor's house," he tells us, "I saw on the way a robin sitting on her nest and as I came near

she went off; but having young ones she flew about and with many cries expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her and one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit but after a few minutes was seized with horror at having in a sportive way killed an innocent creature while she was careful of her young . . . after some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all of the young birds and killed them, supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably . . . in this case I believed that the Scripture proverb was fulfilled 'the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel'."

The other incident of his early childhood to which he refers in the opening paragraphs of his Journal, shows the spiritual depths of his nature as well as the beauty of his imagination. "Through the care of my parents I was taught to read nearly as soon as I was capable of it; and as I went forward from school one day, I remember that while my companions were playing by the way I went forward out of sight and sitting down I read the twenty-second chapter of Revelation, 'He showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, etc.' In reading it my mind was drawn to seek after that pure habitation which I then believed God had prepared for His servants. The place where I sat and the sweetness that attended my mind remained fresh in my memory."

The school which John Woolman attended was doubtless the one to which I have already referred that stood near the Indian spring on the Harding plantation about one mile west of the Woolman home. The school house and the "flowering magnolias" are gone, but the water "clear as crystal" still flows from the hillside. The road over which he trudged to school, the meeting house by the graveyard where he worshipped with his parents, the old mill around which he played as a boy are gone, but the memory of John Woolman still lives and his spirit still hovers over the peaceful and friendly neighborhood. He lived with his parents on the bank of Rancocas Creek and "wrought on the plantation" until his twenty-first year, when with his father's consent he engaged with a shop keeper and baker in Mount Holly to tend shop and keep his books.

I cannot in this brief sketch of this great Quaker more than briefly refer to his life work. His religion was love and few men have come nearer living the life that Christ lived when on earth than he. He was one of the first Friends to realize that slavery was inconsistent with the teaching of Christ and his faithful and heroic labors among the wealthy slave-holding Quakers resulted in the liberation of many slaves and influenced the Society to take an early stand against the institution. He first "appeared in the ministry" when twenty-three years of age, but "not keeping close to the Divine opening," said more than was required of him and sat down in deep humiliation. He afterwards became a powerful Minister in the Society. His conception of the ministry was very high, as indicated by the following quotation from his Journal: "All the faithful are not called to public ministry, but whoever are, are called to minister of that which they have tasted and handled spiritually. The outward modes of worship are various, but whenever any are true ministers of Jesus Christ it is from the operation of His spirit in their hearts first purifying them and giving them a just sense of the condition of others."

The catholicity of his views in an age of narrowness and bigotry is beautifully expressed in the following passage: "I found no narrowness respecting sects and opinions but believed that sincere, upright-hearted people in every Society who truly love God were accepted of Him."

John Woolman is known to us largely because of the spiritual beauty of his Journal, although his essays show him to have been an advanced thinker on social and economic problems. William Ellery Channing pronounced his Journal "beyond all comparison the sweetest and purest autobiography in the language." Henry Crabbe Robinson, a gifted English writer of the Nineteenth Century, called the Journal "a perfect gem! his was a schone seele" (beautiful soul). Quoting once more from his Journal, "to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives." I know of no man in history who in his daily life more consistently lived up to this beautiful precept than John Woolman, the farmer boy of the Rancocas.

Rancocas Village

The attractive and home-like village of Rancocas, established early in the Nineteenth Century, has a very interesting history. Its story begins with the building of the present meeting house in 1772 and the frame school house on or near the site of the Friends' brick school in the year following. There were no houses where Rancocas now stands when the meeting house was erected, with the possible exception of the Lundy home on the southeast corner of the Centreton and Mount Holly roads. The home of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Lundy is undoubtedly the oldest residence in the village. It was owned by Samuel Wills early in the Nineteenth Century, and E. M. Woodward in his History of Burlington County, states that Samuel Cowgill, a weaver, at one time had two looms in the basement. Ezra Haines purchased the property from Samuel Wills in 1829. A small brick house, was standing at that time and the lot contained a little more than 3 acres. The eastern end of the present building is the original house and tradition in the Haines family says that it was standing at the time that the meeting house was erected. Ezra Haines added the western end of the homestead and it has been further improved by Mr. and Mrs. Lundy, who purchased the property in 1911.

The second oldest house, to which I will again refer, is the little brick homestead at the western end of the village which was erected in 1810 as a dwelling house for the school master. The attractive frame homestead adjoining the master's dwelling on the east, formerly the home of Samuel and Mary Haines, and the store property on the southwest corner of the Beverly and Centreton roads, for many years the home of Jacob H. and Margaret W. Leeds, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. William M. Stevens, are two of the oldest residences in the village. It is probable that these properties, together with the double brick house west of the store, the former home of Dr. Granville Woolman, and the attractive home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hilyard, opposite the fire house on the Mount Holly road, were erected in about 1832 when the Centreton Bridge was built.

The large brick house on the northern side of the road, opposite the Stevens store, now the residence of Miss Rachel Haines, was formerly the home of George and Susan Wills Borton, by whom it was erected about 1855. A store property originally stood at the eastern end of the homestead in which George Borton kept store.

George Borton was a lineal descendant of John Borton, the pioneer, who arrived at Burlington from the Parish of Aynhoe, Northamptonshire, in 1679, as shown by the following certificate of removal taken from Barton Monthly Meeting records: "John Borton belonging to Aderbury Meeting Oxon County (Oxfordshire) with his wife Ann and family for the isle called New Jersey."

In December, 1681, he located 110 acres on Rancocas Creek adjoining the Wills tract on the east which he had purchased from Dr. Daniel Wills on March 27, 1680. In 1682 he purchased 200 acres on the south side of Rancocas Creek at a place now known as Borton's Landing, which is located about one mile below Centreton, and named his new home "Hillsdown." He died at Hillsdown in 1687, leaving his home farm to his son John, and the original farm on the north side of the creek to his son William, who sold it to John Wills, son of Dr. Daniel Wills, on November 1, 1698.

John Borton was a signer of the Concessions and Agreements which were drawn up on March 3, 1676, and signed by William Penn and 150 other purchasers of land in West Jersey. He served as Constable in 1682 and as a member of the West Jersey Assembly from 1683 to 1685 and also as Road Commissioner in 1684 and 1685. He has many descendants throughout the County but none, insofar as I can learn, in the immediate vicinity of Rancocas. C. Walter and J. Harvey Borton, of Moorestown, formerly of Rancocas, are direct descendants of George Borton and also of Dr. Daniel Wills, their mother having been Susan Wills Borton. Walter Borton has in his possession a chest that Dr. Wills brought with him on the "Kent" in 1677, also his watch. A set of Dr Wills' surgical instruments is now owned by the Burlington County Historical Society and may be seen at its headquarters at 457 High street, Burlington.

Prior to the building of the first meeting house by the graveyard in 1703, the Friends' meetings were held first in the home of Thomas Harding and later in the homes of Thomas Olive, John Payne, John Woolman, Joshua Humphries and Dr. Daniel Wills. It would be pleasant to associate John Woolman with the meeting house now standing in Rancocas, but as the building was not completed until 1772, the year in which he died in England, it is quite certain that he never worshipped in it.

The first school house in the neighborhood, as already stated, was located near the Indian Spring on the Patterson farm, a little west of the village. The school appears to have served the needs of the children of the farmers until the frame school house was erected in the village on or near the site of the present brick school in 1773. The present brick school house was erected in 1822 rather than in 1807 as stated on the date stone. I have been told that 1807 was painted on the stone at the time of the school celebration in 1913.

The following records which John Russell Hayes, librarian of Friends' Historical Library, Swarthmore College, kindly copied for me from the original Minute Book of Rancocas Preparative Meeting, definitely fixes 1822 as the correct date: "At Ancocas Preparative Meeting held in the 3rd of the 1st mo. 1822, 'The Trustees appointed to superintend the School, report . . . . that the house in which the school is held is so old and out of repair that they cannot indulge a reasonable hope of its being suitable for the purpose of a school another year, they therefore, suggest to the Preparative Meeting the propriety of authorizing the succeeding Trustees to build a new house on the lot whereon the present one stands within the ensuing year. Signed on behalf of the Trustees, Charles Stokes, Clerk."

At the next Preparative Meeting held on 1st mo. 31st, 1822, the proposition was again considered and "the meeting granted to the Trustees of the School the privilege of building a new school house agreeable to the proposition made by them and also to make use of such parts of the means in the Treasurer's hands as appear to be not otherwise appropriated."

At the Preparative Meeting held on 30th of 1st mo. 1823, the Trustees reported "that a school house has been erected agreeable to the direction of the Preparative Meeting in the 2d mo. last and that the whole expense including the price of the new stove, etc., is $559.23 leaving a balance in favor of the school fund of $1.64. Signed on behalf of the Trustees, Charles Stokes, Clerk." As this report was signed on 1st month 23d, 1823, it is evident that the school house was completed in 1822.

At the time of the separation in the Society of Friends in 1827, the meeting and school properties were retained by the Hicksite Friends*, the Orthodox branch worshipping for a time in the hall over the old blacksmith shop on Bridge street. Afterwards, at the invitation of the Hicksite Friends, the Orthodox meeting was held in the eastern end of the building, their own meeting being held at the same time in the western end. For a number of years after the separation, the children of both branches attended school in the brick school house but as "love and unity" did not seem to prevail in full measure, the Orthodox Friends built a separate school house in the eastern end of the meeting house yard. One by one the Orthodox families moved from the neighborhood and their meeting was finally laid down in 1924, the meetings during the last years having been held in the home of Samuel and Mary Haines.

The Hicksite Meeting has been regularly maintained since the separation in 1827, although at times not more than two or three faithful Friends gathered in the historic old building on First day morning.

The faithfulness of the little group of worshippers has been rewarded as the past few years have witnessed a revival of interest in Quakerism in the neighborhood.** The meeting house now shelters forty or fifty worshippers at the First-day morning service. There is an active First-day school under the auspices of the meeting, with an average attendance of about seventy-five.

Let us now return to the little Quaker school house by the roadside, once the centre of the intellectual life of the community. It is still part of

*The terms Hicksite and Orthodox are used strictly in a historical sense, as the two branches are generally known by these names.

**For a period of perhaps six months Henry H. Leeds and his sister, Elizabeth Leeds Buzby, were the only worshippers.

the meeting property but is now a dwelling, the school having been discontinued many years ago. An interesting article could be written about the gifted young men and women who taught in this school, but in this brief sketch I can but refer to a few. John Gummere, ranking high as an educator, was engaged to teach the school in 1800 at an annual salary of Two Hundred Dollars. He was a young man of exceptional ability and it soon became necessary to offer him greater inducements to keep him in the community. His salary was raised to Three Hundred and Fifty Dollars and in 1810, as a further inducement a dwelling house was erected for his use. This little brick house, which is still owned by the Meeting, stands on the south side of Beverly road at the western end of the village. John Gummere taught in the Rancocas school until 1811, when he removed to Burlington, where he afterwards established his "Academy for Boys" which became famous among the educational institutions of that period. He later was elected President of Haverford College and served in that capacity for a number of years.

Charles Stokes succeeded him as teacher in Rancocas and the school was under his care until 1817 with the exception of a brief period in 1815. Mayberry McVaugh, a young man of high character and ability, was engaged to teach the school in 1817, at an annual salary of Three Hundred and Sixty Dollars and with free use of the master's dwelling. He was a gifted teacher and the high standard of the school was maintained while under his care. The village school, however, could not hold the interest of a young man of his ability and in 1822 he purchased Franklin Park farm, where he at a later date established his famous Boys' Academy.

Mayberry McVaugh apparently did not open his Academy before 1831, as the meeting records show that he taught in the Friends' school at Burlington during the years 1829 and 1830. He erected a dormitory at the eastern end of the old homestead and his school was conducted in a frame building which stood north of the building being connected by an enclosed passageway. Thomas Buzby, who owned the farm at the time, tore down the dormitory in 1889 and removed the school building which is now standing on the Park Road north of the residence.

Rachel G. Hunt, one of the school's most scholarly and successful teachers, assumed charge of the school in 1857 and taught for the next two years, when she accepted the principalship of a school in Beverly. In 1861 the Trustees of the Rancocas School, James McIlvain, Jarrett Stokes, Israel L. Stokes, William A. Scattergood, David Ferris, Benjamin Hilyard and Uriah Haines, induced her to return to the school, it being stipulated in the agreement that the school house should be refurnished with more modern furniture and equipment. The old desks and benches were discarded, the house painted and the walls calcimined. A new teacher's desk, new school desks and new blackboards were installed and a more modern dictionary and atlas purchased for the use of the scholars. The little brick schoolhouse by the roadside soon became famous as one of the best equipped schools in the county. Joseph Lancaster, of England, founder of the Lancastrian School System, spent a number of weeks with relatives in Rancocas and very highly praised the Friends' School as it was conducted at that time.

T. Chalkley Matlack, of Moorestown, (1877), and Florence Windle Winner, of Marlton, (1899-1901), are the only persons now living in the neighborhood who taught in this famous old Quaker School. Miss Amy E. Keeler, of Grenloch, assisted Susan Smedley, who had charge of the school in 1907-08-09.

LIBRARY AND LITERARY SOCIETIES—The story of Rancocas would be incomplete without referring to its library and literary societies† the most famous of which was known as the Rancocas Lyceum. The library was organized at a meeting held in the school house on Second Month, 14th, 1859, with a contributing membership of forty-one. The first directors were Charles Stokes, Daniel Wills, James S. Hansell, Samuel Williams, David Ferris and James Hilyard. Charles Stokes was elected President, Samuel C. Woolman, Secretary; James Hilyard, Treasurer, and Jervis S. Woolman, Librarian. The library was first kept in the hall over

†I am indebted to "The History of Friends' School at Ankokas" written by Charles Stokes, for much of my information about the schools and literary societies of Rancocas.

the blacksmith's shop, formerly standing on the Centreton Road. At a later date it was held in a little building erected for the purpose, which is now located on the Maurice Lundy property, opposite the Friends' school house.

The first literary society in Rancocas of which I find a record, was known as "the Literary and Philological Society" organized in 1814. Its meetings were held in the old frame school house which preceded the present brick building. Charles Stokes, then master of the Friends' School, was one of the organizers and probably its first president, as he seems to have been especially active in educational and literary matters at that time. John Comly, William Hilyard, Robert and Thomas Haines, David Stokes, Richard Lundy, Fenton Elkinton and Abel Buzby were active members. "The Beneficial Society" of Rancocas, was organized in 1838 and met in the Friends' school house for a number of years. Very little is known of its activities excepting that they were social and intellectual rather than benevolent.

Another literary society was organized in 1862 and met for a time in the Friends' school but afterwards in the homes of its members, which is referred to in an old account as "the Select Literary Society." Rachel G. Hunt, the celebrated teacher, was in charge of the school at the time of its organization, and doubtless took a prominent part in its activities. John Hunt, Dr. Granville Woolman, Jacob H. Leeds, Jarrett, Israel and Charles Stokes. James S. Hansell, Benjamin Ridgway and Benjamin Hilyard, were all active members.

The Rancocas Lyceum, perhaps the most famous literary society in Burlington county, was organized in 1871 and met for a number of years in the Friends' school house. Elizabeth Deacon Stokes, who afterwards married Henry H. Troth, was the first to suggest organizing a literary society at that time and was chosen the secretary. Albert Hansell was elected president. The meetings of the Lyceum were held weekly from October to April and were largely attended, not only by the people of the neighborhood but also from other communities throughout the county. Its entertainments were home talent and consisted of declamations, readings, essays, debates, etc. Shakespearian recitals were given occasionally and so capably that the Lyceum was frequently referred to as the Quaker Theatre. The Society grew rapidly in membership and the brick school house soon proved to be too small to hold the audiences, especially when the program for the evening called for a debate. In 1877 the Society erected a building for its own use on the north side of the Mount Holly road, east of the meeting house. The building is still standing and is now used by the community as a town hall and fire engine house.

The Lyceum's members comprised the better educated and more cultured residents of Rancocas and vicinity and also not a few from the neighborhoods of Mount Holly, Moorestown and Cinnaminson. Among the most active and influential members I find the names of William R. Lippincott, Dr. J. D. Janney, William, Oliver and Charles Parry, Henry C. Herr, Nancy Haines, Albert Hansell, Dr. Franklin C. Haines, Henry H. Leeds, Josephine Borton, David Ferris, Cyrus Moore, Martha Engle, Horace and Jacob Haines, Lizzie and Annie Stokes, George and Charles P. Wills and John Sholl. Of these "Lizzie" Stokes, now Elizabeth Stokes Troth, of Moorestown, is the only one living.

The parlor literary society and the lyceum, though not necessarily Quaker institutions, have always flourished in Quaker communities and their passing is to be deeply regretted. The mingling of old and young in intellectual fellowship had an educational as well as social value that cannot be fully measured today. We of the older generations look back to these gatherings with a joy and satisfaction that even the memory of long rides through snow or rain, over roads of mud or sand, cannot lessen.

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